

THRILLING TALES OF TERROR 10¢

MYSTEROIOUS ADVENTURES

FEB. NO. 18

COME IN HERE WITH ME,
HELEN! I'VE RETURNED
FROM THE DEAD TO
CLAIM YOU!

NO, FRANK!
NO! I'M
ALIVE! I'M...
EEEEKKK!

HELEN, WAIT!
I... AGHARR!



READY FOR MORE **FEARFUL FAIRY TALES**,
KIDDIE? OKAY, READ ON... THIS IS A **JUICY LITTLE**
MORSEL DESIGNED **ESPECIALLY** TO **DELIGHT**
LOVERS OF **BLOOD AND GUTS!** WE CALL IT
SIMPLY...

GHOST TOWN



NO, PLEASE, YOU
CAN'T... FOR GOD'S
SAKE, PLEASE!
S-STAY AWAY
FROM ME...

NO...NO!



I'VE JUST PASSED A SIGN THAT SAYS "**BUFFALO CITY, 12 MILES!**" THAT'S WHERE I'M HEADED. I'VE NEVER BEEN THERE BEFORE BUT WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? **BUFFALO CITY** SOUNDS AS GOOD AS ANYPLACE ELSE...

BUFFALO CITY, EH? OKAY, IT'LL MAKE A SAFE **HIDE-OUT**. I GUESS. ALL I NEED IS SOME **TWO-BIT BURG TO HOLE UP** IN UNTIL THE **HEAT** DIES DOWN!



THREE DAYS AGO I PULLED A BANK JOB IN KANSAS. EVERYTHING WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH AND NOW ALL I NEED IS SOMEPLACE TO LIE LOW FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS...

\$50,000... AND ALL MINE! OH, BROTHER, WHATTA TIME I'LL HAVE ONCE I CAN SHAKE THE WILD WEST OUTTA MY HAIR! IT'LL BE BACK TO **NEW YORK** FOR ME!



BUT FOR THE TIME BEING, MY PLANS FOR ENJOYING THE LOOT WILL HAVE TO WAIT! SAFETY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PLEASURE AND NOW I'M IN BUFFALO CITY.



FOR PETE'S SAKE, THIS DUMP LOOKS DESERTED! WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

ALL THE STORES ARE LOCKED, THE RESTAURANTS CLOSED AND THE BARS EMPTY! I FINALLY END MY TOUR OF INSPECTION AT THE TOWN'S ONLY HOTEL.



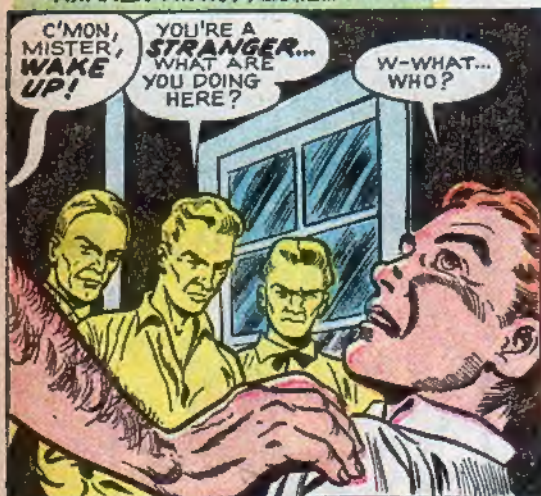
HEY, ANYBODY HOME.. ANYBODY HERE? WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED... LOOKS LIKE I PICKED A REAL GHOST TOWN!

BUT THAT'S FINE WITH ME! WHY NOT? WHAT BETTER PLACE TO HOLE UP THAN IN A GHOST TOWN? I PICK THE BEST ROOM IN THE HOTEL AND GET READY FOR SOME SLEEP.



HOPE I CAN (YAWN) FIND SOME FOOD AROUND HERE AFTER I WAKE UP!

I FALL INTO A DEEP SLEEP... BUT WHEN I AWAKEN I'M NOT ALONE...



C'MON, MISTER, WAKE UP!

YOU'RE A STRANGER... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

W-WHAT... WHO?

THEY START FIRING QUESTIONS AT ME AND I BEGIN GETTING WORRIED. I WISH MY GUN WEREN'T IN MY JACKET HANGING ACROSS THE ROOM.



WHO SENT YOU HERE, MISTER

WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?

WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR?

WAIT A SECOND! TAKE IT EASY! I CAN'T ANSWER EVERYTHING AT ONCE!

THE SIGN OVER THE HOTEL READ "HORACE BELL PROPRIETOR" IT WAS A WILD CHANCE BUT I TOOK IT...



HORACE BELL'S MY UNCLE! MY LAST LIVING RELATIVE! I CAME ALL THE WAY FROM NEW YORK TO FIND HIM. ARE ONE OF YOU MEN HORACE? I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM!

HORACE BELL IS DEAD! DIED A WEEK AGO!

I HOLD MY BREATH WHILE THEY STAND LOOKING DOWN AT ME... WILL THEY BELIEVE ME? WILL THEY FALL FOR IT...?



TOO BAD YOU GOT HERE TOO LATE, SON, BUT IF YOU'RE HORACE'S NEPHEW, YOU'RE ONE OF US! WELCOME!

NOW WAIT A MINUTE, SAM, YOU CAN'T BE SURE...

STOP WORRYING, LOOK AT HIM... LOOKS JUST LIKE HORACE!

AND SO THEY BELIEVE ME...THE IDIOTS... THEY EVEN HOLD A SPECIAL DINNER IN MY HONOR...



DRINK UP, CURT! IT'S THE REAL THING!

BUT AS I EAT I NOTICE SAM CURTIS WATCHING ME LIKE A HAWK...



I DON'T LIKE THE WAY HE'S LOOKING AT ME! WONDER IF HE SUSPECTS ANYTHING! UGH, WHAT LOUSY TOMATO JUICE!

DURING DINNER I FINALLY ASK A QUESTION THAT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME ALL NIGHT...



SAY, WHERE WAS EVERYBODY THIS MORNING? YOU BOYS OUT PROSPECTING OR SOMETHING?
HAHAHAHAHA! YOU'RE A REAL CARD, CURT! JUST LIKE OLD HORACE WAS! SURE, BOY, WE WAS PROSPECTING! HAHAHA!

HIS LAUGHTER PUZZLES ME BUT I QUICKLY FORGET IT WHEN AFTER DINNER I HEAR AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN SAM CURTIS AND ANOTHER MAN...



I'M WARNING YOU, LEWIS, WE'VE MADE A MISTAKE! I WATCHED HIM ALL DURING DINNER AND I KNOW!

SAM, YOU'RE A FOOL! I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THAT BOY'S ONE OF OUR KIND! HE'S HORACE BELL'S NEPHEW!

THE MORE I LISTEN, THE MORE NERVOUS I GET... I DON'T LIKE IT... I DON'T LIKE IT ONE BIT...

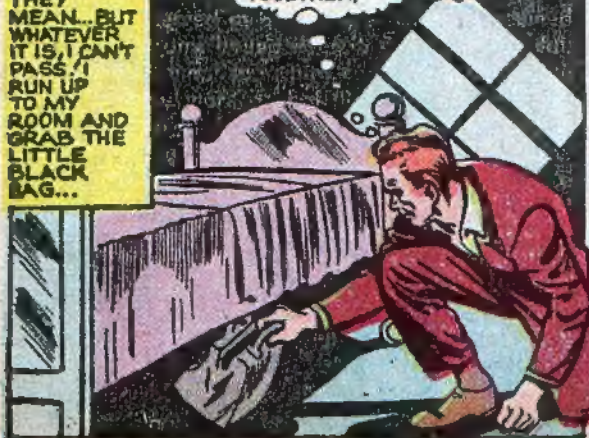
WELL, IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH! WE'LL GIVE HIM A TEST AND IF HE PASSES I'LL SHUT UP!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! LET'S GET TO IT... I'M SICK OF HEARING THIS NONSENSE!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF A TEST THEY MEAN... BUT WHATEVER IT IS, I CAN'T PASS! I RUN UP TO MY ROOM AND GRAB THE LITTLE BLACK BAG...

I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE! IF THEY'VE HEARD ABOUT THE KANSAS BANK JOB AND FIND OUT I'M NOT BELL'S NEPHEW, THEY MAY PUT TWO-AND-TWO TOGETHER!



BUT WHEN I OPEN THE DOOR TO LEAVE...

GOING SOMEWHERE, CURT?

NO... ER, NO! I JUST WANTED TO... ER... UNPACK SOME CLOTHES!

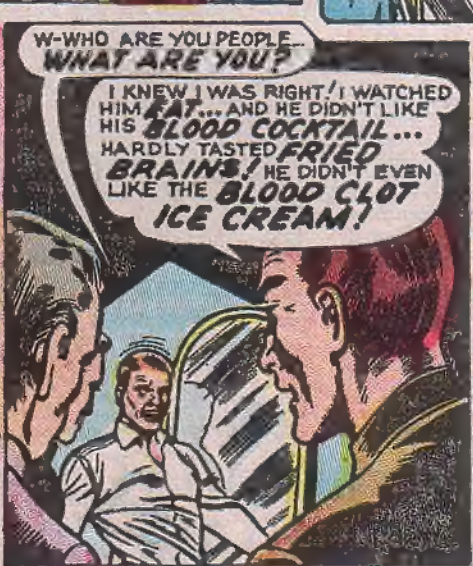
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, BOY! HATE TO BOTHER YOU, BUT SAM HERE HAS GOT A CRAZY NOTION... AND WE WANT TO SHOW HIM HE'S WRONG!



AND SO I'M TRAPPED MENTALLY I START KISSING THE 50 G'S GOODBYE AND PREPARING FOR A 20 YEAR STRETCH IN THE PEN! WHAT LOUSY LUCK!



My voice catches in my throat! Something is wrong... horribly wrong. I AM THE ONLY ONE IN THE ROOM WHO IS REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR!



THEY MOVE SLOWLY TOWARD ME AND I BACK AWAY... BUT THERE'S NO PLACE TO RUN... NOWHERE TO HIDE...



AND NOW EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE... HORRIBLE TERRIFYING SENSE! NOW I KNOW WHY ONLY MY REFLECTION SHOWED IN THE MIRROR, WHY THE TOWN WAS DESERTED DURING THE DAY!

YOU'RE... YOU'RE VAMPIRES!

YES, YOUNG MAN, YOU'RE RIGHT, AND YOU'LL DIE FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE!

HE'S NICE AND FRESH, BOYS!

YEAH, MUCH BETTER THAN THAT FROZEN STUFF!

THEY'RE CRAWLING ALL OVER ME NOW... IT'S TOO LATE FOR HELP! TOO LATE FOR ANYTHING BUT DEATH! I CAN FEEL THE BLOOD BEING DRAINED FROM MY BODY...

THE END

WELCOME, *GHOUL LOVERS!* YOUR OLD FIEND, *THE CORPSE*, BRINGS YOU ANOTHER *SICKENING SAGA* TO DELIGHT YOUR *TERRORIFIC APPETITES!* THIS ONE SHOULD KEEP YOU *DANGLING WITH JOY:* A *NAUSEATING NARRATIVE* I CALL...

STRING 'EM UP!



Hy Pleishman

OUR STORY OPENS IN A SMALL PARK IN BERLIN, GERMANY, IN THE EARLY 30'S BEFORE THE RISE OF HITLER. PLAYING TO A LAUGHING APPRECIATIVE CROWD IS FRITZ KURTZ, PUPPETEER...



...AND SO WE BID YOU GOOD NIGHT!

BRAVO!

BRAVO, HERR KURTZ!

THE 55-YEAR-OLD CRAFTSMAN COMES FROM BEHIND THE STAGE TO ACCEPT THE CROWD'S APPLAUSE... FRITZ KURTZ HAS A HEART AS BIG AS HIMSELF. CHILDREN AND ADULTS ADORE HIM AND HE RETURNS THEIR AFFECTION...

THANK YOU, MY FRIENDS! THANK YOU!

NO, NO, FRITZ, IT IS *WE* WHO THANK YOU!



THE CROWD DEPARTS AND THE AGING PUPPETEER GATHERS HIS PRECIOUS EQUIPMENT TOGETHER. TO FRITZ HIS PUPPETS ARE LIKE CHILDREN. HE HAS CARVED EACH ONE INDIVIDUALLY, MADE THEIR CLOTHES AND EVEN GIVEN THEM NAMES...

AH, IT WAS A **GOOD** NIGHT, EH, LITTLE JOCKO?



FRITZ IS A LONELY MAN... HE HAS NO WIFE, NO FAMILY. THE PUPPETS ARE HIS ONLY COMPANIONS...

-SO, MY SWEET EILEEN, YOUR NOSE NEEDS A LITTLE PAINT? TOMORROW OLD FRITZ WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!



A SHORT TIME LATER THE PUPPETEER MAKES HIS WAY ALONG THE EMPTY BERLIN STREETS TOWARD HIS DRAB ROOM...

I MUST SEE ABOUT NEW COSTUMES FOR... **T-THAT GIRL!** SHE'S GOING TO JUMP!

WAIT! YOUNG WOMAN, WAIT/DON'T DO THAT!



FRITZ DROPS HIS SUITCASE AND RUNS TO WHERE THE GIRL STANDS... BUT SHE DOES NOT WISH HIS HELP. INSTEAD, SHE TRIES TO FIGHT HIM OFF...

NO! LET ME GO! I DON'T WANT TO LIVE! I WANT TO DIE!

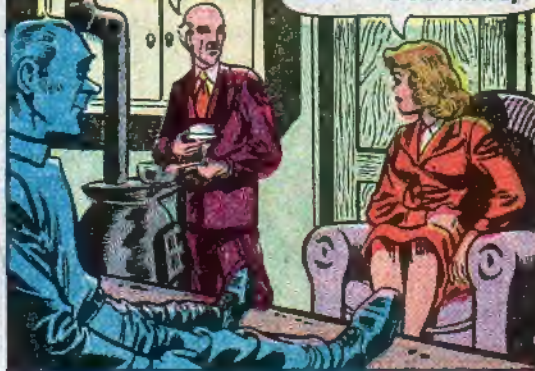
BUT THIS IS **WRONG!** ANYONE SO **PRETTY** SHOULD WISH TO LIVE **FOREVER!**



FRITZ SPEAKS CALMLY AND GENTLY TO HER... AND THEN LEADS HER TO HIS ROOM WHERE HE MAKES COFFEE...

IT IS A HUMBLE ROOM AND YET IT IS HOME!

YOU'RE **LUCKY!** I HAVE NO HOME... I LIVE IN **ALLEYS**, SLEEP IN **DOORWAYS!**



FRITZ LISTENS AS SHE POURS OUT HER TALE OF WOE... NO MONEY, NO FAMILY, NO FUTURE! HER NAME IS FRIEDA HAAS, SHE IS 26...

NOW TELL ME WHY I SHOULD WANT TO LIVE **FOREVER!** WHAT FOR? FOR **THIS** KIND OF LIFE?

BUT YOU MUST NOT **DESPAIR!** YOU ARE BUT A **BABY!** LIFE WILL **CHANGE** FOR YOU!



HE INSISTS THAT FRIEDA STAY WITH HIM UNTIL SHE CAN FIND WORK... AND AS HE GOES TO SLEEP ON THE FLOOR FRITZ KURTZ IS A HAPPY MAN! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS HE DOES NOT FEEL LONELY...

SLEEP WELL, LITTLE FRIEDA!



THE DAYS PASS INTO WEEKS AND WITH EACH DAY FRITZ GROWS TO LOVE HIS LITTLE FRIEDA MORE... HUMBLY, HIS VOICE SHAKING WITH EMOTION, HE ASKS HER TO MARRY HIM...

I-I KNOW I AM AN OLD MAN, FRIEDA... BUT YOU **NEED** ME! LET ME TAKE **CARE** OF YOU! ALLOW ME TO **LOVE** YOU!

YES, FRITZ, I'LL MARRY YOU! YOU ARE A **KIND** MAN... THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME!



AND SO THEY ARE MARRIED AND FOR A YEAR FRITZ MOVES ON WINGS OF ECSTASY... HE WORKS LONG AND HARD AND WITH FRIEDA'S HELP, THE PUPPET SHOW EARN'S GOOD MONEY!

SEE, MY JOCKO, FRITZ HAS BROUGHT YOU A **MOTHER**... AND YOUR MOTHER HAS BROUGHT US **SUCCESS!**

FRTZ, YOU SWEET OLD **IDIOT!** IMAGINE BEING A MOTHER TO **PUPPETS!**



AS THE SHOW CONTINUES TO DO A FLOURISHING BUSINESS FRITZ SPENDS EVERY SPARE DIME ON FRIEDA... HE TAKES HER TO EXPENSIVE CAFES, BUYS HER EXTRAVAGANT CLOTHES...

OH FRITZ, IT'S **BEAUTIFUL!**

NOTHING IS BEAUTIFUL ENOUGH FOR YOU!



BUT THEIR GOOD FORTUNE DOES NOT LAST... THREE WEEKS LATER AS FRITZ IS MANIPULATING THE STRINGS DURING A LATE SHOW...

FRITZ, YOU'RE NOT **MOVING** JOCKO'S LEG! HE... **FRITZ, WHAT'S WRONG?**

M-MY HEART... FRIEDA, MY **HEART...**



A DOCTOR IS SUMMONED AND WHEN FRITZ HAS BEEN PUT TO BED, FRIEDA HEARS THE DREADED NEWS...

H-HE CAN **NEVER** WORK AGAIN!

THAT'S RIGHT, MRS. KURTZ! **NEVER!** OVER-WORK IS WHAT CAUSED HIS CON-DITION! THE **SLIGHTEST** STRAIN OR SHOCK COULD **KILL** HIM!



AFTER THE DOCTOR LEAVES FRITZ CALLS FRIEDA TO HIM AND GENTLY REASSURES HER...

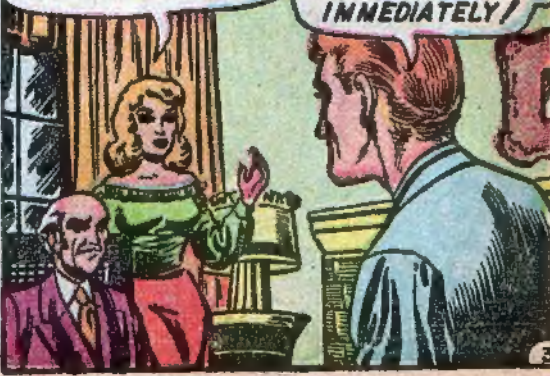
DO NOT WORRY, MY LITTLE ONE. WE WILL HIRE A **PUPPETEER** TO WORK FOR US! TOGETHER YOU AND HE WILL RUN THE SHOW AND I SHALL KEEP THE PUPPETS IN REPAIR! EVERYTHING WILL BE **ALL RIGHT!**



AND SO IT IS THAT HANS LERNER, NOVICE PUP-PETEER, ENTERS THE LIVES OF FRITZ AND FRIEDA... HANS IS A BIG MAN, AN ATTRACTIVE MAN, AND AS THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE, HIS EYES ROVE APPRECIATIVELY OVER FRIEDA...

...AND YOU CAN COME TO WORK **IMMEDIATELY?**

YES, MRS. KURTZ, FOR **YOU** I CAN COME **IMMEDIATELY!**





AND YOU MUST TAKE **GOOD CARE** OF MY PUPPETS! THEY ARE LIKE **CHILDREN** TO ME!

DO NOT FEAR, HERR KURTZ, I'LL TAKE **GOOD CARE** OF **EVERYTHING** THAT BELONGS TO YOU!

HANS' INTEREST IN THE VOLUPTUOUS FRIEDA IS BY NO MEANS ONE-SIDED... THAT NIGHT AS THEY PREPARE TO WORK, FRIEDA MAKES IT CLEAR THAT SHE FINDS THE TALL MUSCULAR MAN MUCH TO HER LIKING...



PERHAPS WE CAN HAVE DINNER TOGETHER AFTER THE SHOW, HANS? THERE ARE THINGS WE SHOULD DISCUSS!

YES... **MANY** THINGS!

AND SO ON THEIR FIRST NIGHT AS PARTNERS, HANS AND FRIEDA EXCHANGE THEIR FIRST KISS...



THE MINUTE I LAID EYES ON YOU I KNEW YOU WERE **MY KIND, BABY!**

FORGOTTEN IN AN INSTANT IS FRITZ AND HIS GREAT LOVE... FRIEDA IS TOO DEEPLY ATTRACTED TO HANS TO REMEMBER ANYTHING BUT HER OWN SELFISH PLEASURES...



I **KNEW** YOU COULDN'T BE IN LOVE WITH THE **OLD FOOL!**

IN LOVE WITH HIM? UGH! HE MAKES ME **SICK!**

THE WEEKS PASS QUICKLY AND OLD FRITZ FINDS HIMSELF LEFT ALONE MORE AND MORE...



AH, SO YOU'RE **LONESOME** TOO, EILEEN? YES, IT IS LONELY WITHOUT FRIEDA TO TAKE CARE OF US!

BUT FRIEDA IS INTERESTED IN NO ONE BUT FRIEDA... AND HANS!

QUICK, DARLING **KISS ME** BEFORE THE CROWD GETS HERE! OH, HANS, I MISS YOU SO AT NIGHT WHEN I HAVE TO GO TO **HIM!**

HIM... **HIM!** I'M **TIRED** OF HIM! **STUPID OLD MAN** AND HIS **SILLY PUPPETS!** I WISH HE WERE **DEAD!**



AND SUDDENLY BOTH HANS AND FRIEDA ARE QUIET... THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT, EACH INTENT ON BUT ONE THOUGHT...



HANS, WE... WE COULD...

YES, WE COULD... **AND WILL!** LISTEN TO ME, FRIEDA... I THINK I HAVE A **PLAN!**

AND SO NOT ONLY DOES FRIEDA CHEAT ON FRITZ, BUT NOW SHE HELPS PLAN HIS DEATH... HIS **MURDER...**

...AND REMEMBER WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID: THE *SLIGHTEST* SHOCK COULD *KILL* HIM! WELL, WE'RE GOING TO GIVE HIM A SHOCK... AND IT *WON'T* BE SLIGHT! WE'RE GOING TO TELL HIM THE *TRUTH!*



HANS AND FRIEDA LAY THEIR PLAN CAREFULLY AND ON THE FOLLOWING DAY WHEN FRITZ AWAKENS FROM HIS AFTERNOON NAP...

(YAWN) FRIEDA HONEY, WHERE... **FRIEDA! HANS! M-MY GOD!** I--I MUST STILL BE FAST ASLEEP... STILL *DREAMING!*



NO, *STUPID* YOU'RE *NOT* DREAMING! THIS IS *REAL!* YOU'VE BEEN PLAYED FOR A *SUCKER!* FRIEDA DOESN'T LOVE YOU... SHE NEVER LOVED YOU!



D-DON'T LET HIM TALK LIKE THAT, FRIEDA! HE--HE'S LYING! TELL ME HE'S LYING!

HE'S *NOT* LYING! I'VE NEVER LOVED YOU... YOU WERE A MEAL TICKET, THAT'S ALL! A *FAT* REPULSIVE OLD MEAL TICKET!



TEARS FILL THE OLD MAN'S EYES AND A SEARING PAIN SHOOTS ACROSS HIS CHEST... FRIEDA, HIS BELOVED FRIEDA HATES HIM... DESPISES HIM... THE PAIN GROWS STRONGER, MORE INTENSE... HIS CHEST FEELS LIKE IT'S CAUGHT IN A VISE...

F-FRIEDA, (GASP) M-MY HEART... YOU'RE KILLING ME!

GOOD! THAT'S FINE, FRITZ! AND JUST FOR A FINAL TOUCH, WATCH ME KISS YOUR WIFE!



FRITZ FALLS BACKWARD GASPING... HE'S DYING...

AND *THIS* IS WHAT I THINK OF YOUR *IDIOTIC* PUPPETS! WATCH ME, FRITZ, WATCH WHILE I *BREAK* IT INTO A *THOUSAND* PIECES!

NO (GASP) NO...



THE LAST THING FRITZ SEES BEFORE HE DIES IS JOCKO HIS FAVORITE PUPPET, SMASHING AGAINST THE FLOOR... AS DEATH BRINGS THE NIGHTMARE TO A CLOSE HE HEARS FRIEDA LAUGHING, SNEERING AT HIM.



DIE, FRITZ! DIE!

UGHMM... (GASP) AGHRRRR...



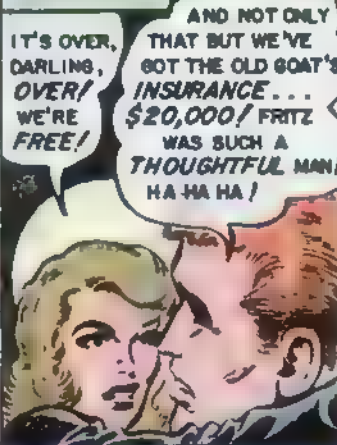
FRTZ'S FUNERAL IS QUIET AND DIGNIFIED... AND TO THE INNOCENT BYSTANDER FRIEDA PRESENTS A PERFECT PICTURE OF THE GRIEVING WIFE



ASHES TO ASHES...

F-FRTZ, (908) FRTZ ...

BUT WHEN THE MOURNERS HAVE LEFT AND FRIEDA AND HANS RETURN TO THE KURTZ APARTMENT.



IT'S OVER, DARLING, OVER! WE'RE FREE!

AND NOT ONLY THAT BUT WE'VE GOT THE OLD GOAT'S INSURANCE... \$20,000! FRTZ WAS SUCH A THOUGHTFUL MAN! HA HA HA!

THE HAPPY COUPLE OPEN A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE TO CELEBRATE AND SETTLE DOWN TO AN EVENING OF PLEASURE.



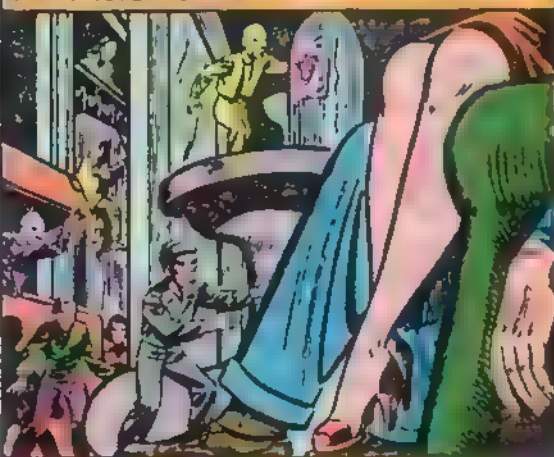
AFTER A "DIGNIFIED" WAITING PERIOD, WE CAN LEAVE BERLIN! OH, THERE'S SO MUCH WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO!

ONE THING I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IS BREAKING EVERY ONE OF THOSE LOUSY PUPPETS!

HOURS PASS AS THE LOVERS MURMUR TO ONE ANOTHER... DROWSINESS OVERCOMES THEM... THEY FALL ASLEEP IN EACH OTHERS ARMS AND ALL IS QUIET WITHIN THE ROOM... QUIET EXCEPT FOR...



THEY COME FROM ALL SECTIONS OF THE APARTMENT... FROM THE BEDROOM, FROM THE TRUNK, FROM THE CLOSET... THEY MOVE SLOWLY, QUIETLY, CONVERGING ON THE SLEEPING PAIR...



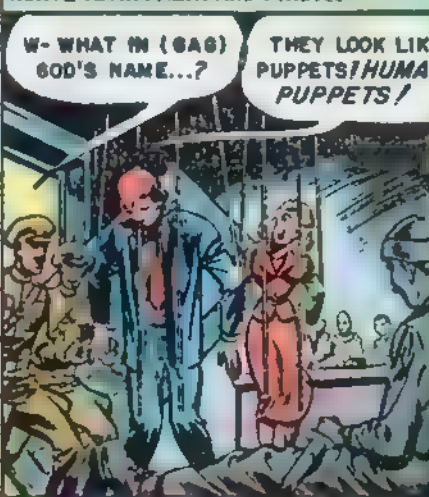
THE LIGHT GOES OFF AND MINUTES LATER A WOMAN'S AGONIZED SCREAM FILLS THE NIGHT AIR. IT IS FOLLOWED BY LOW GRUNTS AND MOANS FROM A MAN...



GOOD GOD, WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE!

SOMEBODY GET THE POLICE!

IT IS AN HOUR LATER WHEN POLICE FINALLY BATTER DOWN THE DOOR TO THE KURTZ APARTMENT AND FIND...



W-WHAT IN (GAG) GOD'S NAME...?

THEY LOOK LIKE PUPPETS/HUMAN PUPPETS!

TCH. TCH... TCH, THE POLICE WERE UTTERLY BEWILDERED, AND WHY NOT? HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN WOODEN PUPPETS WITH DRIED BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS... AND KNIVES CLUTCHED BETWEEN THEIR INANIMATE FINGERS? MMMNNNN?

THE END

SO YOU JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH **GORE**,
EH, KIDDIES? NOT ENOUGH **TERROR**, NOT
ENOUGH **HORROR**? WELL, HERE'S A
REPULSIVE LITTLE GEM THAT SHOULD
KEEP EVEN **YOU** SATIATED. IT'S A
DRUNKEN DRAMA WE CALL.

BOTTOMS UP



THE YEAR IS 1929 AND ALTHOUGH THE 18TH AMENDMENT HAS PROCLAIMED PROHIBITION, THE MAJORITY OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS STILL INDULGE IN A LITTLE NIP...

C'MON, JOE,
OPEN UP!
WE'RE
DYING OF
THIRST!

RIGHT, MRS. FRANKLIN!
SORRY TO TAKE SO LONG,
BUT YOU CAN'T BE TOO
CAREFUL THESE DAYS...
THE **LAW**,
YOU KNOW!



INSIDE JOE'S SPEAKEASY THE BATHTUB GIN FLOWS LIKE WATER. LOU HENDRICKS, THE BARTENDER IS KNOWN ALL OVER NEW YORK FOR HIS "SPECIAL" CONCOCTION: GIN AND VODKA WITH JUST A TOUCH OF BITTERS...

THERE
YOU ARE,
FRANK,
**TWO
SPECIALS!**

BETTER MAKE TWO MORE FAST,
LOU...THE FRANKLINS SLUG 'EM
DOWN **QUICKER** THAN I
BRING 'EM!



LOU HENDRICKS WAS BORN FOR HIS JOB—THERE'S NOTHING LOU LIKES BETTER THAN A DRINK! HE'D RATHER DRINK THAN EAT...



HEY, LIQUOR-HEAD, THAT STUFF IS FOR THE CUSTOMERS... NOT YOU!

OKAY, HONEY, OKAY! IT'S JUST A LITTLE ONE!

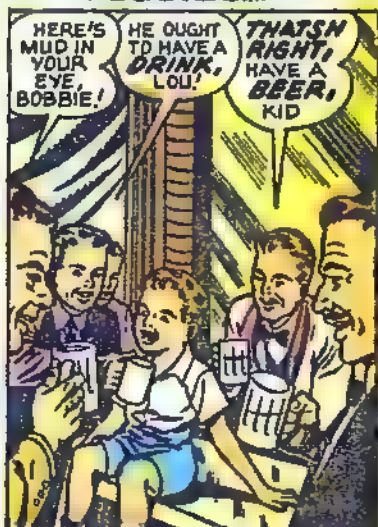
NORA, THE WAITRESS AT JOE'S SPEAKEASY IS LOU'S WIFE. NORA IS A WORRIER, AND ONE OF THE THINGS SHE WORRIES ABOUT IS LOU'S DRINKING...



PLEASE, LOU, DON'T DRINK ANYMORE TONIGHT! YOU KNOW WHAT JOE SAID LAST TIME YOU GOT DRUNK!

FOR PETE SAKE, STOP NAGGING ME, NORA! I CAN HOLD MY LIQUOR!

THE HENDRICKS HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR THREE YEARS AND HAVE A SON TWO-YEARS-OLD! OCCASIONALLY, AGAINST NORA'S WILL, LOU BRINGS BOBBIE TO THE SPEAKEASY...



HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE, BOBBIE!

HE OUGHT TO HAVE A DRINK, LOU!

THAT'S RIGHT, HAVE A BEER, KID



BOBBIE, COME HERE THIS INSTANT! OH LOU, HOW CAN YOU DO THIS TO YOUR SON?

YEAH, I GUESS SHE'S RIGHT! THIS AIN'T NO PLACE FOR A KID!

THE BOYS WERE JUST TEASING, THEY DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING!

POOR NORA, SHE HAS HER PROBLEMS! DESPITE ALL HER PLEAS, LOU REFUSES TO CUT DOWN ON HIS DRINKING! IT IS ON NEW YEARS EVE THAT REAL TROUBLE DEVELOPES.



LOU, WHAT IN GOD'S NAME ARE YOU DOING BACK THERE? I'VE GOT THREE DRINKING! YOU'RE DRINKING AGAIN!

HAPPY NY

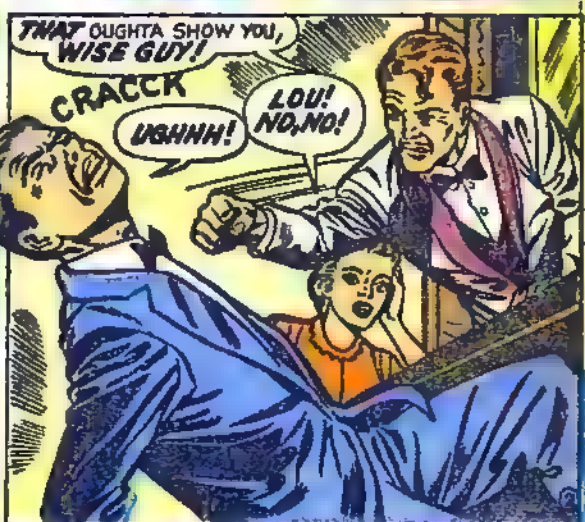
RELAX, JOE, THEY'LL WAIT!

BUT ON THIS, THE BUSIEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR, JOE IS IN NO MOOD FOR LOU'S USUAL TRICKS...



LISTEN, YOU DRUNKEN SOT, I'M WARNING YOU... ONE MORE DRINK AND YOU'RE FIRED!

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME! NOBODY PUSHES LOU HENDRICKS AROUND!



THAT OUGHTA SHOW YOU, WISE GUY!

CRACK

UGHNN!

LOU! NO, NO!

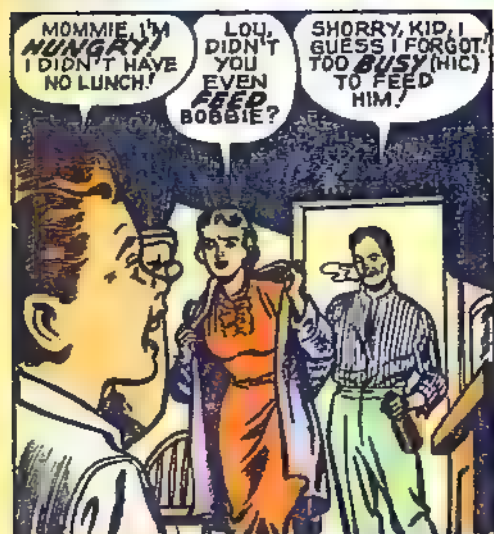
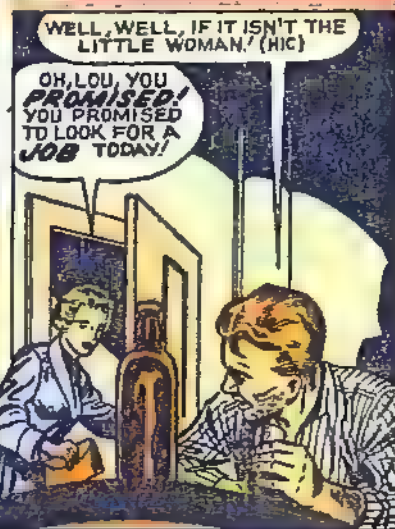
IT TAKES ONLY A MINUTE FOR JOE'S BOUNCERS TO THROW BOTH LOU AND NORA OUT OF THE SPEAKEASY FOR GOOD...



NO, IT ISN'T A VERY HAPPY WAY TO START A NEW YEAR...



BUT EVERYTHING IS NOT ALL RIGHT! WEEKS PASS... WEEKS IN WHICH NORA WORKS AS A CHAMBER MAID, BUT IN WHICH LOU STAYS HOME... HOME WITH A BOTTLE...



FOR A MOMENT NORA'S ANGER REACHES THE BOILING POINT... BUT SHE KNOWS IT'S USELESS TO ARGUE WITH LOU WHEN HE'S DRUNK!



THE WEEKS TURN INTO MONTHS AND NORA, WHO NOW HAS TAKEN TWO JOBS TO KEEP THE FAMILY ALIVE, IS NEAR THE END OF HER ROPE...





SCOTCH! LOU, THAT WAS THE RENT MONEY! FOR GOD'S SAKE, HAS ALCOHOL AFFECTED YOUR BRAIN? HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY? LIQUOR IS RUINING OUR LIVES!

FOR PETE'S SAKE, STOP SCREAMING! CAN'T A MAN EVEN HAVE A LITTLE DRINK OCCASIONALLY!

AND AS THE MONTHS DRAG INTO ENDLESS DRUNKEN YEARS, NORA STOPS COMPLAINING/SHE DOESN'T HAVE TIME... SHE WORKS 12 HOURS A DAY... AND LOU, WHY, LOU'S THE SAME AS EVER...



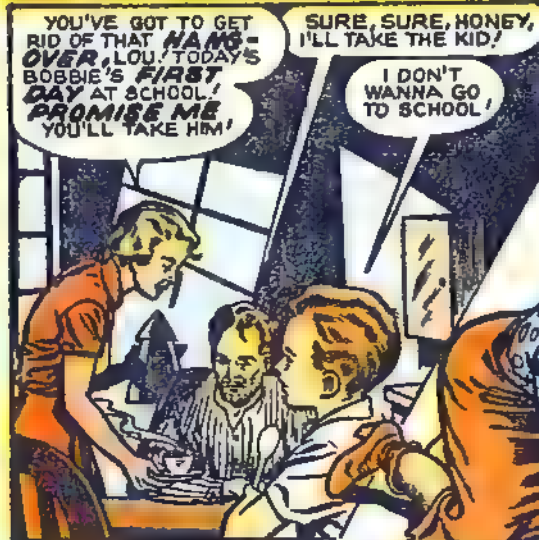
C'MON, LOU, WAKE UP AND GET INTO BED! YOU'VE BEEN SITTING IN THIS CHAIR THREE DAYS!

WHAT... WHO?

THE ONLY TIME THE EX-BARTENDER IS SOBER IS EARLY IN THE MORNING BEFORE NORA GOES TO WORK...

NORA IS AT HER JOB WHEN THE PHONE CALL COMES NEXT MORNING...

SHE GETS TO HER FEET WEARILY AND WALKS TO THE SERVICE PHONE...



YOU'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THAT NANO-OVER, LOU. TODAY'S BOBBIE'S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL, PROMISE ME, YOU'LL TAKE HIM!

SURE, SURE, HONEY, I'LL TAKE THE KID!

I DON'T WANNA GO TO SCHOOL!

HEY, NORA, THERE'S A CALL FOR YOU!

ALL RIGHT, THANKS, JIMMY!

YES, THIS IS MRS. HENDRICKS...

THIS IS THE POLICE DEPARTMENT,

MA'AM! SORRY TO HAVE TO BREAK IT TO YOU THIS WAY, BUT YOUR SON'S BEEN KILLED! RUN OVER BY A CAR ON HIS WAY TO SCHOOL!



NORA DOESN'T SPEAK! SHE STANDS FOR A MOMENT AND THEN REPLACES THE RECEIVER IN ITS CRADLE! SHE MOVES SLOWLY, TAKES HER COAT FROM THE LOCKER ROOM AND WALKS FROM THE HOTEL, HER FACE A BLANK MASK...

SHE ARRIVES HOME TO FIND LOU AT HIS USUAL SPOT... SITTING AT THE TABLE, A BOTTLE BEFORE HIM... HER VOICE IS QUIET, ALMOST EMOTIONLESS AS SHE SPEAKS...

WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE BOBBIE TO SCHOOL, LOU?

AW, HE'S OKAY, HONEY! HE DIDN'T NEED ME! THE KID'S OLD ENOUGH TO GO TO SCHOOL BY HIMSELF! MY BOOTLEGGER PHONED! HE JUST GOT IN A SHIPMENT OF...



HEY, IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

NORA, IS ANYTHING WRONG?

IT'S LIKE SHE DON'T EVEN HEAR!



BUT SHE DOESN'T LISTEN TO THE REMAINDER OF WHAT HE HAS TO SAY... INSTEAD, SHE TAKES OFF HER COAT AND WALKS INTO THE KITCHEN, STOPPING AT THE CLOSET...



HE KILLED HIM... KILLED BOBBIE!

IT WAS (HIC) TOO GOOD A BARGAIN TO PASS UP! A WHOLE CASE OF RYE FOR ONLY...

LOU MUMBLES ON DRUNK ONLY, NOT SEEING NORA APPROACH FROM THE REAR...

YESSIR, IT'S SCHWELL STUFF! THE BEST! YOU OUGHTA TRY SOME, HONEY!

MURDER-ER! DIRTY DRUNKEN MURDER-SA! YOU KILLED HIM, LOU... KILL-ED OUR SON!

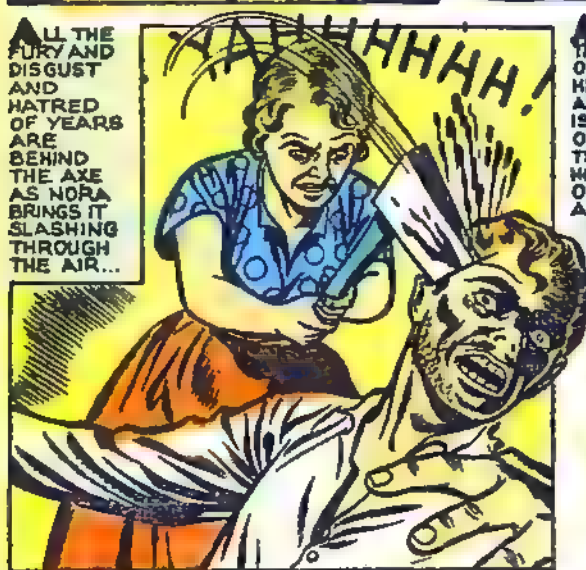


BUT IT'S ALL OVER NOW! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU! I'M GOING TO CRACK THAT DUMB LIQUOR-SOAKED SKULL INTO A THOUSAND PIECES!

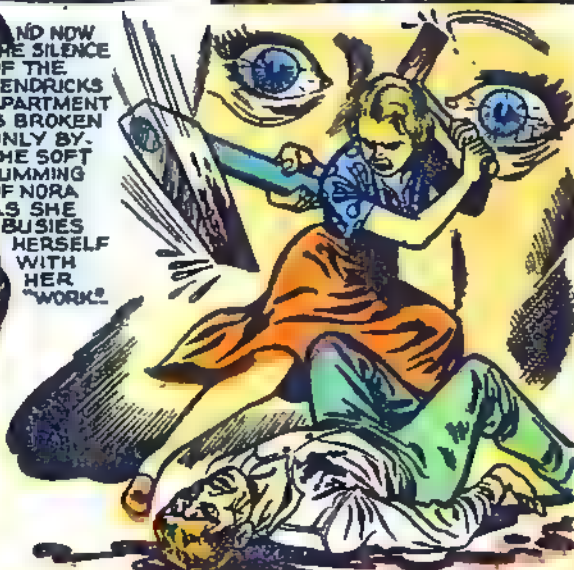
IT'D DO YOU GOOD, NORA. A LITTLE DRINK'D DO YOU GOOD!



ALL THE FURY AND DISGUST AND HATRED OF YEARS ARE BEHIND THE AXE AS NORA BRINGS IT SLASHING THROUGH THE AIR...



AND NOW THE SILENCE OF THE HENDRICKS APARTMENT IS BROKEN ONLY BY THE SOFT MUMBING OF NORA AS SHE BUSIES HERSELF WITH HER "WORK."



FRANK WESTLAKE IS LOU'S BOOTLEGGER AND WHEN, AN HOUR LATER, NORA APPEARS AT HIS DOOR, HE'S NOT SURPRISED! AFTER ALL, DOESN'T A GOOD WIFE BUY HER HUSBANDS LIQUOR?

DON'T TELL ME THAT HUSBAND OF YOURS HAS FINISHED HIS CASE ALREADY?

NO, THAT'S WHY I'M HERE, I'D LIKE TO RETURN IT. I NEED THE MONEY, FRANK... FOR A FUNERAL... A DOUBLE FUNERAL!



THE LOOK ON NORA'S FACE ALLOWS NO ROOM FOR QUESTIONS AND WESTLAKE TAKES THE CASE BACK, DEDUCTING MONEY FOR THE ONE BOTTLE LOU DRANK! NORA LEAVES AND THE BOOTLEGGER LOOKS AFTER HER SPECULATIVELY...

HMMN, FUNNY! I FIGURED THAT WOULD BE INSIDE LOU BY NOW!



BUT IF WESTLAKE WERE TO EXAMINE THE REMAINDER OF THE CASE MORE CLOSELY HE'D SEE THAT IT IS LOU WHO IS INSIDE THE LIQUOR! HEH...HEH...HEH! SLEEP WELL, KIDDIES!

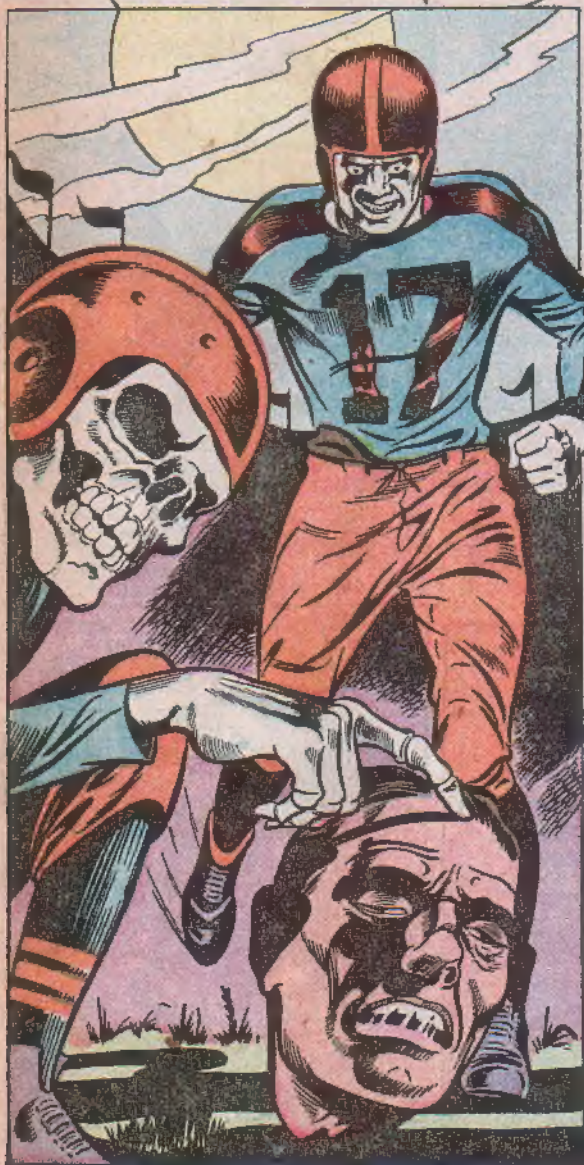
THE END!

MEN...HEH...HEH... GREETINGS, FIENDS!
 THIS IS YOUR FRIEND, THE **COFFIN-KEEPER**,
 ALL READY TO **CHILL YOUR BLOOD** WITH
 ANOTHER **LOATHSOME TALE OF HORROR!**
 GRAB YOUR **PUTRID DROOL BIBS** AND PREPARE
 TO **ENJOY YOURSELVES** AS YOU READ...

SKIN 'EM ALIVE!



IT IS A TENSE MOMENT AT BUSCH STADIUM. THE
 SCORE IN THIS, THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME,
 BETWEEN THE **CHICAGO BLUE DEVILS** AND THE
ST. LOUIS TIGERS IS TIED AT 20-20!
 CHICAGO HAS JUST SCORED AND NOW, WHILE
 THOUSANDS WAIT BREATHLESSLY, THE **BLUE
 DEVILS** WILL TRY FOR THE EXTRA POINT...



THE CHICAGO FANS SCREAM THEIR DELIGHT AS
 TAD REYNOLDS EX-ALL AMERICAN FROM CALI-
 FORNIA PREPARES TO ENTER THE GAME!
 REYNOLDS HASN'T MISSED AN EXTRA POINT IN
 THREE YEARS OF PRO BALL...



REYNOLDS MOVES SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY THE TENSION AND EXCITEMENT DOESN'T BOTHER HIM! HE'S BEEN IN CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS BEFORE... AND NEVER MISSED!



GET MY FAVORITE BALL INTO PLAY, COACH!

THE KICKER'S "GOOD LUCK" BALL IS TOSSED TO THE UMPIRES WHO NOD AND TOSS IT TO CHICAGO'S CENTER / BERNIE YOUNG, COACH FOR FOR ST. LOUIS, MOANS AND HOLDS HIS HEAD IN ANGUISH..



OH, NO... NO! STOP HIM, BOYS! BLOCK THAT KICK!

TIGER

THE DRUMS FROM THE CHICAGO BAND ROLL AS THE TWO TEAMS LINE UP FOR THE KICK...AND FROM THE ST. LOUIS SIDE OF THE STADIUM ONE MIGHTY YELL SWELLS OVER THE FIELD..



BLOCK THAT KICK! BLOCK THAT KICK!

C'MON, NEIL! GET A DECENT PASS BACK HERE!

LATHAM HOLDS AND THE FAMOUS REYNOLDS TOE CONNECTS SOLIDLY WITH THE OVAL BALL...

AND THEN SUDDENLY THERE IS SILENCE. AS 40,000 SPECTATORS WATCH BREATHLESSLY AS HARVEY NEIL, BLUE DEVIL CENTER, FLIPS THE BALL TO TONY LATHAM WHO WILL HOLD...



GET IN THERE, FELLAS! STAMPEDE HIM!

DESPITE A STRONG WIND, THE BALL SAILS END-OVER-END BETWEEN THE ST. LOUIS GOAL POSTS! IT'S A PERFECT KICK AND AS THE WHISTLE SOUNDS ENDING THE GAME, THE BLUE DEVILS WIN, 21-20!

DOWN ON THE PLAYING FIELD THE CHICAGO TEAM CONVERGES ON TAD REYNOLDS AND LIFTS THE MIGHTY HERO TO THEIR SHOULDERS... TO HIM THEY OWE THE CHAMPIONSHIP...



HE DID IT! BY GOD, HE DID IT!

THAT'S THE 49TH STRAIGHT EXTRA POINT HE'S MADE!

HURRAH FOR REYNOLDS!



WHATTA GUY! TAD BOY, YER A GENIUS!

REMIND ME TO GIVE YOU A BIG FAT KISS, REYNOLDS!

THANKS PETE, BUT I'D RATHER HAVE A DRINK!

BUT IN THE ST. LOUIS DRESSING ROOM THERE IS LITTLE CAUSE FOR JOY... THE DEFEATED TIGERS MOVE SLOWLY, LISTLESSLY, THEIR MINDS BECLOUDED WITH SORROW...

IT JUST **DOESN'T** MAKE SENSE! **EVERYBODY** LOUSES UP **OCCASIONALLY!** NOBODY'S **PERFECT**... EXCEPT TAD REYNOLDS!

THERE'S SOMETHING **UNNATURAL** ABOUT THAT GUY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS... BUT HE GIVES ME THE **CREEPS!**

YEAH I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN/AND THERE'S SOMETHING **FUNNY** ABOUT THAT **GOOD LUCK BALL** OF HIS TOO!

AW, DON'T HAND ME THAT **BALONEY!** IF THAT'S THE BEST **EXCUSE** YOU CAN **DREAM-UP** FOR LOSING, YER WASTING YOUR BREATH! **"UN-NATURAL"** HE GIVES YOU THE **"CREEPS"** ...**HOODEY!**



BILL PAUL AND FRANK HOWARD, TIGER ENDS, LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER AS BERNIE YOUNG STOMPS DISGUSTEDLY FROM THE DRESSING ROOM...

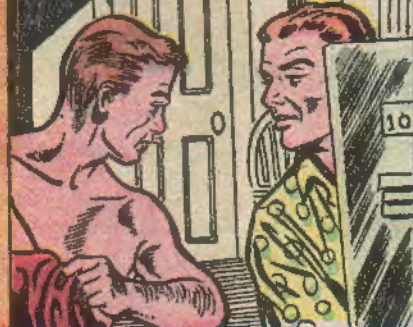
THE COACH IS **SORE** AND I DON'T BLAME HIM... BUT I'D **STILL** LIKE TO GET A LOOK AT THAT **BALL!**

ME, TOO! LET'S GET DRESSED **FAST** AND SEE IF WE CAN FIND IT!

THE TWO MEN HURRIEDLY DON STREET CLOTHES AND WALK OVER TO THE BLUE DEVIL DRESSING ROOM...

WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL EVERYBODY'S CLEARED OUT!

YEAH! THERE GO HENRY AND CALDWELL, THEY'RE USUALLY JUST ABOUT THE LAST!



TWENTY MINUTES LATER WHEN THE LAST OF THE CHICAGO TEAM HAS LEFT, THE ST. LOUIS ENDS ENTER THE DRESSING ROOM!

NOW, IF WE CAN JUST...

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, BOYS?

WH...OH, YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE ARE! WE WANTED TO SEE THE **BALL** TAD REYNOLDS USED ON THAT **LAST KICK!** FOR KIND OF A **MOMENTO** YOU MIGHT SAY!

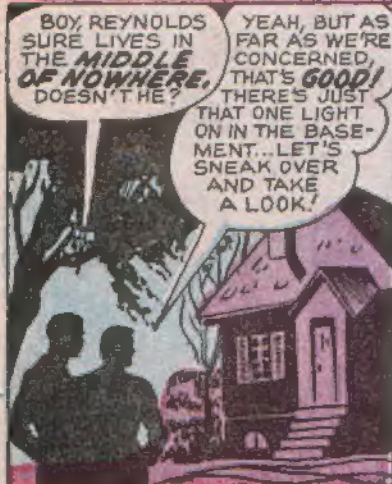
SORRY, FELLAS, BUT REYNOLDS ALWAYS HANDLES ALL HIS **EQUIPMENT HIMSELF!** WON'T LET ME OR NONE OF THE OTHER STAFF NEAR THEM FOOTBALLS OF HIS!



BUT INSTEAD OF GIVING UP, FRANK HOWARD AND BILL PAUL ARE MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER. AFTER A HASTY DINNER THEY DECIDE UPON A PLAN...

THEY MAKE THEIR WAY STEALTHILY ACROSS THE DESERTED STREET AND PEER INTO THE BASEMENT ROOM...

ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY BOTH MEN FEEL A SLOW CHILL STEAL DOWN THEIR SPINES AND WITH A SINGLE INTENT, THEY TURN TO FLEE...



BOY, REYNOLDS SURE LIVES IN THE **MIDDLE OF NOWHERE**, DOESN'T HE?

YEAH, BUT AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, THAT'S **GOOD!** THERE'S JUST THAT ONE LIGHT ON IN THE BASEMENT... LET'S SNEAK OVER AND TAKE A LOOK!



FOR **CRIPES SAKE**, LOOK AT THAT **STUFF!**

I DON'T **GET IT!** WHAT'S THAT **TABLE...** AND ALL THOSE **NEEDLES AND KNIVES!**?



C'MON, FRANK LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

YEAH, I...

SORRY, BOYS BUT YOU'RE **NOT GOING ANYWHERE!** MAKE ONE **WRONG MOVE** AND I'LL PUT A **BULLET** THROUGH YOUR HEADS!

REYNOLDS LEADS THE TWO TERROR-STRICKEN MEN DOWN INTO THE BASEMENT ROOM AND THEN LAUGHS JEERINGLY AT THEM!

OLD HARRY CALLED AND TOLD ME TWO GUYS WERE INTERESTED IN MY FOOTBALL! I KIND OF THOUGHT YOU MIGHT DROP AROUND... SO I'VE BEEN **WAITING** FOR YOU! GO AHEAD, **HOT SHOTS...** LOOK TO YOUR **HEART'S CONTENT!**

W-WE DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING, TAD! JUST... JUST THOUGHT MAYBE... MAYBE

YOU THOUGHT MAYBE SOMETHING WAS FUNNY ABOUT THE BALL! WELL, YOU WERE RIGHT, HOWARD... **VERY RIGHT!** FEEL IT... GO AHEAD, **SOFT, ISN'T IT! REAL SOFT!**

YEAH... I-IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE... LIKE... **LIKE HUMAN SKIN! GO AHEAD, SAY IT... HUMAN SKIN!** NOTHING BETTER FOR KICKING... **PIGSKIN** IS ALL RIGHT, BUT TAKE IT FROM ME, **HUMAN SKIN'S THE BEST!**



NO!! NO!!!

AND NOW FRANK AND BILL KNOW THE MEANING OF THE OPERATING TABLE AND THE LONG KNIVES AND NEEDLES... POOR LADS, TCH, TCH, TCH, YOU MIGHT SAY THEY WERE ALL **WRAPPED UP** IN THEIR FAVORITE SPORT, **FOOTBALL!**



I'M GLAD THE BOYS STOPPED BY... MY OLD BALLS WERE GETTING A **LITTLE** WORN OUT!

AND WHEN THE BLUE DEVILS PLAYED THEIR FIRST GAME NEXT SEASON I DOUBT THAT ANYONE NOTICED THE SMALL TATTOO ON THE FOOTBALL... THE SMALL TATTOO WITH THE INITIALS **F.H.**...



HURRAH FOR REYNOLDS!

LOOK AT THAT BALL GO!